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DRAFT REPORT OF THE OPEN-ENDED AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE CAUSES OF CONFLICTS AND THE PROMOTION OF DURABLE PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

00-52879

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

1. On 25 September 1997, the Security Council convened at the level of Foreign Ministers to consider the need for a concerted international effort to promote peace and security in Africa. In a Presidential Statement issued at the conclusion of the meeting, the Council requested the Secretary General to submit a report on the causes of conflict in Africa, ways to prevent those conflicts, and how to lay a foundation for durable peace and economic growth.

2. The report of the Secretary General on The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa was submitted to the Security Council in April 1998. On the Security Council's recommendation, the report was considered by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the General Assembly. At its substantive session of 1999, the ECOSOC discussed the implementation of the relevant recommendations in the Secretary General's report. On 28 July 1999, the ECOSOC adopted the draft agreed conclusions on the development of Africa: implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on Africa.

3. Following its debate on the report in October 1998, the General Assembly, by resolution A/RES/53/92, called for the establishment of an open-ended ad hoc working group of the General Assembly to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report. In addition, the resolution also recommended that the Working Group determine its mandate and modalities, taking into account the deliberations of the ECOSOC at its substantive session in July 1999.

Mandate

4. The Working Group's mandate was established by resolution 54/234, which called on the President of the General Assembly to put into effect the establishment of the Working Group to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary General's report and to prepare for discussions at the Fifty fifth Session of the General Assembly. More specifically, the resolution requested that, in addition to monitoring of the recommendations as a whole, the Working Group also monitor the implementation of ECOSOC agreed conclusions (1999/2) and Council decision 1999/270, as well as poverty eradication, debt relief, HIV/AIDS and support to countries in post-conflict situations.

Organization of Work

5. Resolution 54/234 also requested the President of the General Assembly to serve as the ex-officio chairman of the working group and to designate two vice-chairpersons and to convene an organizational meeting of the group no later than March 2000 to decide on modalities and develop arrangements for the effective functioning of the working group. Following consultations, His Excellency, Mr. Kishore Mahbubani, the Permanent Representative of Singapore and His Excellency, Mr. Inocencio Arias, Permanent Representative of Spain were invited to serve as vice-chairpersons.

6. In addition to monitoring the status of follow-up of the recommendations of the Secretary General's Report and the Agreed ECOSOC decisions, resolution 54/234 identified the following areas of focus for the Working Group: **poverty eradication, debt relief, HIV/AIDS and support for countries in post conflict situations.** At the organizational session on 7 March 2000, which set the broad parameters for the work of the group, in response to the statement of the Group's chairman, the President of the General Assembly, it was decided that, in addition to those themes identified by the resolution, the group would also focus on **financing for development** and the issue of **refugees**.

7. It was also decided to have three working sessions from 13-17 March 2000, 15-19 May 2000 and 17-21 July 2000. The group agreed that the first session would be dedicated to statements by delegations; the second session to an interactive dialogue with relevant United Nations Funds, Programmes and Specialized Agencies in a "Hearings" format and the third session to hearings by selected Special Envoys and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and to finalise the report of the group to the Fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Documents considered by the Group included the Secretary General's April 1998 report, relevant GA resolutions, the September 1999 Progress Report of the Secretary General on the Implementation of the Recommendations Contained in his April 1998 report (S/1999/1008), ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1999/2 and conference room paper (A/AC.258/CRP.3) on Implementation of the Recommendations of the Secretary General's report.

8. At the request of the Working Group, a website (www.un.org/esa/africa/adhocWg/index.html) was also set up, to provide up-to-date information on its work. The one-stop website contains background information relating to the Working Group, including progress reports to the Security Council and ECOSOC. It also contains statements made at the various sessions of the Working Group and comprehensive matrices reflecting the status of implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report, based on feedback by the UN agencies, funds and programmes. This website will be regularly updated to reflect progress in the proceedings of the Working Group, as well as the status of implementation of the report of the Secretary General.

9. This report of the working group is organized along the following lines: Part II gives a broad and concise overview of the progress made in implementing the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary General. Part III provides a summary of the major constraints and obstacles in the implementation of the recommendations, while Part IV suggests further actions and measures that can be taken to accelerate the implementation of those recommendations covering the defined thematic areas of focus.

II. PROGRESS

10. Discernible progress has been made in a wide range of areas in the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report. A detailed review on progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the

Secretary General's report is contained in conference room paper (A/AC.258/CRP.3). Key highlights are given below:

a) **Peace-making and peace-keeping** – Recommendations relating to these areas have been actively taken up the Security Council, and progress made up to September 1999 has been outlined in the Progress Report to the Security Council (S/1999/1008).

b) **Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict** – The subject has received considerable attention of the Security Council since 1998 (see Presidential Statement S/PRST/1999/6 and resolution 1265(1999). More recently, a report (S/1999/957) was presented by the Secretary-General to the Security Council in September 1999, as a result of which a Security Council resolution (1296/2000) was adopted in April 2000, aimed at securing the Council's commitment to key recommendations of the report of the Secretary General. The resolution will ensure that the protection of civilians in armed conflicts forms an integral part of the Council's deliberations each and every time it considers peace-keeping operations.

c) **Addressing Refugee Security Issues** – Since 1998, UNHCR and relevant agencies have taken a number of initiatives in relation to the security, civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, which are included in the "Ladder of Options," prepared by UNHCR. These options range from preventive measures and cooperation with national law-enforcement authorities, through deployment of civilian or police monitors to military deployment.

d) **Mitigating the social and environmental impact of refugees** – Aimed at bridging the gap between relief and development, the UNDP/World Bank/UNHCR "Brookings Process" has been developed in 1999.

e) **Post-Conflict Peace-building** – The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), has established an inter-agency Reference Group tasked with resolving issues related to the programming of post-conflict activities in an integrated manner. IASC has also developed the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), as a strategic planning tool that promotes the transition from relief to development.

f) **Financing Recovery** – The World Bank's Post-Conflict Fund (PCF), which supports planning, piloting and analysis of reconstruction activities, by funding governments and partner organisations, was converted into a Trust Fund in 1999. The PCF is a channel of resources, US$12 million in fiscal year 1999, to support of countries in transition from conflict to sustainable peace and economic growth. The World Bank also administers, since 1999, on behalf of the Government of Japan, a trust fund, the JPCF, which complements the PCF.

g) **Working Towards a Coordinated Response**– The United Nations has been further developing the strategic framework approach to embrace political, human rights, humanitarian and development activities, aimed at promoting a durable peace and sustainable development. The approach will ensure, *inter alia*, that humanitarian action supports overall peacebuilding activities. Following consultation with ACC, **Generic Guidelines for the Further Application of the Strategic Framework** were approved. The experience to date has afforded some valuable lessons, and the approach is now being applied in Sierra Leone and

Burundi. The ECA has recently launched the Mano River Basin Initiative, aimed at assisting the process of Post-Conflict Peace-Building within and among Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

h) **Securing Respect for Human Rights and the Rule of Law** – A majority of African countries have now ratified the major international human rights instruments.

i) **Emphasizing Social Development** - Under the UN Special Initiative on Africa (UNSIA), significant progress has been made in addressing education and health issues in African countries, as detailed in the progress report presented to the CPC in June, 2000. With the support of WHO/AFRO, almost all African countries have launched UNDP Africa 2000 Initiative on water supply and sanitation and prepared action plans.

j) **Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women** – As of April 2000, 49 African countries had ratified the International Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women.

k) **Debt Relief** – The Development Committee of the IMF and the World Bank has endorsed the "**Enhanced HIPC Initiative**" in September 1999, which linked the Programme of deeper, faster and broader debt relief. The IMF has transformed the concessional lending facility the ESAF) into the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRFG).

l) **Opening International Markets** – The United States Congress passed the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, aimed at promoting trade with Africa by lowering or eliminating tariffs and quotas on products from the region, was signed into law on 18 May, 2000. The Cotonou Agreement, which defines relations between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and the European Union, was signed on 23 June, 2000. The agreement provides a new framework for trade cooperation and economic partnerships between the two groups.

m) **Support for Regional Cooperation** – UNDP, collaborating with ECA and the African Development Bank, is providing assistance to the OAU in the implementation of the Abuja Treaty to develop capacity for the establishment of the African Economic Community.

n) **Harmonising current international and bilateral initiatives** – The UN Development Group through the Coordination mechanisms of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), thematic groups and the Resident Coordinator System continues to play a major role in harmonising UN system activities at country level. In addition, UNSIA assures coordination at the regional level, in key areas covered by this initiative.

11. While some progress may be discerned in the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary General's Report, it should be noted that there are on-going activities in most areas, which require regular monitoring. It should also be noted that in a number of areas it is difficult, or premature, to assess impact and measure performance. In order to gauge progress in these areas, reliable indicators must be developed, wherever appropriate.

III. OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT

12. Notwithstanding the progress in implementing some of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report, a number of obstacles still remain. These stem from a variety of inter-related factors including insufficient political will on the part of the international community and Africa, deficiencies in governance in some African countries, the persistence of armed conflicts, inadequate resources and capacity, a general deterioration of public health, a weak private sector and economic structure, as well as coordination difficulties.

- **Political will**

13. Effective implementation of the recommendations requires strong political will on the part of African countries and the international community. The Secretary-General's report has clearly and candidly set out the responsibilities of African countries and their development partners. There have been some encouraging examples and notable developments in this regard, as demonstrated by the highlights of progress given above. However, in many cases, the required commitment has been lacking. For example, in a number of cases, there remains a lack of political will in some African countries, to implement peace accords and other measures required to ensure peace and sustainable development in Africa. The lack of political will is also evidenced in the failure of donor countries, to provide adequate resources – financial and technical, to address many of the problems identified in the intergovernmental processes, as well as by the Secretary General in his report. A sustained tripartite effort, by the African countries, the United Nations system organizations and the donor community are necessary for the successful implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General.

- **Governance**

14. Since 1998, progress has been made in governance in the majority of African countries. However, efforts must be sustained and in a number of cases, there still remains room for improvement. The culture of transparency and accountability has yet to take root in many countries, which makes it difficult to consolidate the reforms recommended by the Secretary General, particularly with respect to securing respect for human rights, fighting corruption, and enhancing administrative efficiency. Weak governance remains a major cause of continuing political instability and violence in a number of countries.

- **Armed conflicts**

15. The proliferation of armed conflicts has hampered efforts to achieve progress in economic and social development. The inability to find solutions to ongoing conflicts and the emergence of new ones continue to effectively cripple the productive activities of these countries as well as further erode the poor social infrastructure that exists in many countries. Illicit arms sales to Africa, as well as the deviation of resources from development to military activities, continue to further impede progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary General's report.

- **Financial Resources**

16. Although Africa as a whole, including its economic recovery and development, has been identified as a priority by member states of the General Assembly, the amount of resources allocated to development assistance to African countries has been decreasing since the early 1990s. These include a decline in bilateral and multilateral assistance through the various United Nations Funds and Programmes and Specialized Agencies. Declining ODA flows have not been adequately supplemented by FDI flows as happened in some developing countries in the 1990s. Furthermore, tariff peaks and tariff escalation continue to limit market access and thus affect the ability of African countries to maximize export earnings. Along with a drop in the quantity of ODA, a decline in quality has also been detected. Furthermore, it has been observed that tied aid has reduced its effectiveness and led to a situation where the amount of aid available for use within the recipient countries has become relatively low. Moreover, the savings rate in Africa remains low, in part because of the high level of poverty, and also partly due to the inappropriate allocation of resources towards non-productive expenditure. Finally, structural adjustment programmes, which is still under implementation in many countries, and the obligation to repay external debt, have also undermined the implementation of anti-poverty and other social development programmes.

- **Human Resource Capacity**

17. Many African countries suffer from a lack of adequate capacity to deal with a host of economic, social and political challenges. This includes a range of capacities from economic management to human rights. The decline in capacity occurred over time and may be attributable to the economic and political crises of the 1980s and early 1990s and the subsequent imposition of austerity measures. In addition, increasing political instability and conflicts have also resulted in a brain drain, and added to the erosion of institutional capacity for economic management and administration in general, and, in particular, for carrying out some of the needed economic reforms recommended by the Secretary General. Furthermore, the difficulty in generating accurate statistical information on a timely basis has also made it difficult to effectively formulate policy and plan programmes. Overall, the lack of capacity has setback efforts by African countries to take ownership of development assistance.

- **Public health**

18. The deepening of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, now the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa, and the continuing scourge of malaria have severely affected the prospects for sustainable development in Africa. Both HIV/AIDS and malaria have a major impact on the productivity of the labour force, the social fabric, and the economy at large. The continuation of armed conflicts in many countries has also helped to spread HIV/AIDS.

19. A number of factors have hampered efforts to deal effectively with HIV/AIDS and malaria, related particularly to those recommendations of the Secretary General

dealing with research and the prevention and treatment of these diseases. Clearly, the resources available are not commensurate to the tasks ahead. For example, current spending on AIDS in Africa is only $165 million per year, which falls far short of the $2-3 billion UNAIDS has estimated as necessary to combat the pandemic. The costs for treating HIV/AIDS, including retro-viral drugs, are generally high and accessibility highly limited. The recent announcement by five pharmaceutical companies to cut the cost of AIDS drugs for Africa is welcomed. However, it still puts effective treatment far beyond the reach of the average HIV infected African. In addition to resource constraints, political instability and ongoing conflicts are major impediments to combating the disease. Compounding the problem of resources, the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS and the discrimination associated with it remains a serious problem in many countries.

- **Private sector and the structure of economies**

20. The indigenous private sector is small in many African countries and is faced with a number of problems including low productivity, lack of investment, adequate infrastructure, credit and market information. Furthermore, many African countries still remain highly dependent on one or two primary commodities for the bulk of their exports. Despite market openings, many countries remain unable to capitalise on the new opportunities to export new products. Furthermore, in areas where African exports are competitive, for example, in textiles and some agricultural commodities, Africa continue to face discriminatory tariff and non-tariff barriers.

- **Access to technology**

21. The widening of the technological gap and the deepening digital divide between African and developed countries have been major obstacles to development. Non-access to modern technology has resulted in the low levels of productivity and the lack of competitiveness of products exported by many African countries. In addition, there is a need for increased participation by African countries in information technology that would complement and enhance the development and modernization of the basic sectors of the economy.

- **Coordination**

22. While significant progress has been made in coordination, at the country and regional levels, a number of problems remain. These concern, first and foremost, a existence of a number of UN coordination frameworks, mechanisms and processes such as the Common Country Assessment (CCA)/UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), as well as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), and the need for greater coherence among them. This, in addition to the multiplication of non-UN initiatives, result in some cases, in a duplication of effort and an increasing burden on countries to satisfy the different needs and requirements of the various partners. In addition, the numerous accounting and reporting rules of various partners (donor countries and the UN system) have resulted in placing an additional burden on African countries, facing a scarcity of skills and information technology.

MODALITIES FOR FURTHER ACTION

22. Although a number of actions have been taken, in the spirit of the recommendations, a great deal of effort is required to develop mechanisms and frameworks to ensure that actions currently being taken, can be applied in a consistent manner. This would include the following areas:

- **National plans of action for human rights;**
- **Promoting transparency and accountability in public administration;**
- **Enhancing administrative capacity in African countries;**
- **Creating a positive environment for investment and economic growth;**
- **Enacting needed economic reforms;**
- **Investing in human resources;**
- **Addressing public health issues;**
- **Focussing on social justice;**
- **Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women;**
- **Restructuring International aid;**
- **Reducing debt burden;**
- **Opening international markets;**
- **Support for regional cooperation and integration;**
- **Harmonizing current international initiatives.**

23. There is clearly a need for regular monitoring to ensure effective implementation of the recommendations made under the above mentioned themes.

24. In regard to the following thematic areas outlined in resolution 54/234, and identified by the Working Group, the Group considered ways and means to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary General's report, and arrived at a number of proposals which are outlined below.

Poverty eradication

25. The group considered the overarching theme of poverty eradication and noted that the implementation of the vast majority of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report would lead to poverty reduction. The proposals submitted under the other themes given below are thus aimed at addressing this fundamental, crosscutting issue.

Debt relief

26. The group proposes to the General Assembly that it call on the international community to cancel the debt of the least developed African countries, including those emerging from conflicts, since debt repayment drains valuable resources from the rehabilitation and construction of essential development infrastructure and programmes designed to address crippling issues of poverty and inequality.

27. The group noted the inadequacy of contributions to the HIPC Trust Fund, which is provided for on a voluntary basis. In this connection, the group proposes that

the General Assembly call on creditor countries to make a firm commitment to take action to write off the debt within a specific time frame. In this regard, the group urges that serious consideration be given to UNCTAD's proposal to create an independent body to undertake an assessment of the sustainability of African debt with a commitment to write off the debt deemed unpayable.

28. In addition, the group further proposes that the General Assembly call on the international community to consider providing further debt relief to other highly indebted African countries currently not eligible for the enhanced HIPC initiative.

Financing for development

29. The group proposes that the General Assembly ensure that the special concerns of African countries be taken into account in the Financing for Development Conference to take place in 2001.

30. The group proposes that the General Assembly calls on donor countries to continue their efforts to arrive at a consensus on the untying of development assistance in line with the Secretary General's recommendation that a greater percentage of development assistance be retained by African countries.

31. The group also recommends that the General Assembly calls on donor countries to make concerted efforts to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for development assistance for developing countries and 0.15 for LDCs. In this regard, the group proposes that the General Assembly request the Secretary General (or relevant member states) to organize a meeting on development assistance to Africa with the objective of sharing the experiences of donor countries that have reached or surpassed the established targets.

32. The working group proposes that the General Assembly call on the United Nations to redouble its efforts to support African countries in developing effective diversification strategies and towards that end, calls on donor countries to support this effort.

HIV/AIDS/Malaria

33. The Group proposes that the General Assembly gives particular attention to the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa; recommends its member states to support and actively participate in the International Partnership Against AIDS in Africa, and to support UNAIDS in this endeavour;

34. The Group also proposes to the General Assembly that it invite ECOSOC to consider the following themes in its future work:

- Ways and means to mainstream HIV/AIDS prevention in development activities of the United Nations system in Africa;
- Ways and means of promoting inter-country cooperation to encourage best practices and sharing of experiences;
- Ways and means of promoting regional responses to HIV/AIDS prevention;

- Ways and means of utilizing intellectual property rights to serve the needs of AIDS prevention and treatment.

35. The group proposes that the General Assembly call on the Secretary General to vigorously pursue his advocacy for the creation of a market for the production of drugs and vaccines for the poor by forging private-public partnerships and establishing a fund to this effect.

36. The group stresses the need to make available low cost generic drugs to poor countries. In this regard, the working group also recommends that the General Assembly ensure that the proposal by WHO to set up a reference group consisting of African countries and pharmaceutical companies is further explored and supported.

37. In addition, the group also proposes that the General Assembly call on the Secretary General to continue his advocacy to create an understanding on the merits of investing in prevention and treatment of priority diseases such as malaria.

Post Conflict Peace-building

38. Recalling paragraph 17 of ECOSOC's Agreed Conclusions (1998/1), in which it agreed on the need to develop, through a strategic framework, when appropriate, a comprehensive approach to countries in crisis, the working group proposes that the General Assembly request the Council consider creating an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on countries emerging from conflicts, with a view to assessing its economic needs and elaborating a long term programme of support for implementation that begins with integrating relief into development. The programme could build on initiatives already taken by various bilateral and multilateral partners for specific countries.

39. The working group welcomes the creation of a Post-Conflict Fund as well as Multi-Donor Trust Funds that are being used to fund a variety of post-conflict activities in some African countries and urges the General Assembly to call on member states to provide additional resources to it.

40. In recognition of the widespread unemployment among youth and the attractions that looting through war could present, the working group recommends to the General Assembly to urge the ILO to extend its "Jobs for Africa" programme to countries emerging from conflict as its contribution to postconflict peacebuilding along with its ongoing programme in assisting the reintegration of demobilized soldiers and other war-affected groups.

Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)

41. The working group recommends that the General Assembly encourages the Secretary General, in consultation with the affected states, to explore the best ways to support LDC hosts of refugees.

42. The working group proposes that the General Assembly request the Secretary General to commission a study on the obstacles to assisting IDPs and recommend

specific actions to be taken to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations in assisting them and ensuring their protection.

43. The working group also proposes that the General Assembly request the international law commission to study the feasibility of creating legal frameworks for IDPs.

Coordination

44. The working group recommends that the General Assembly urge the Secretary General, in consultation with the President of the World Bank, to further clarify and strengthen the links among the various coordination mechanisms, including the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa (UNSIA) and the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) with a view to streamlining them and creating complementarity and synergy.

45. The working group recommends to the General Assembly to invite bilateral donors to become more active in coordinating mechanisms for development assistance at the country level.

46. The working group recommends that the General Assembly requests the Secretary General to take the lead in promoting the use of sector wide approaches as a tool for coordination at the country level in the context of the UNDAF.

Need for Follow-up

47. The Working Group had monitored progress made in the implementation of the Secretary General's report as a whole. However, given time constraints, the group focussed on the chosen thematic areas identified by the resolution and at its organizational session. The progress review contained in this report however reveals a need for continued monitoring, not only in the areas of focus, but in all other areas included in the report. It should be noted that in some of these areas, little or no action has been taken. Accordingly, the Working Group proposes the following:

- That its mandate be extended to enable a bi-annual review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary General's report.

- That in order to effectively monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary General's report, wherever applicable, measurable indicators should be developed to assess impact and measure performance.

- That a limited number of thematic working groups be established to make specific proposals on a number of remaining issues that have not been covered in the previous three sessions or that have not been adequately discussed.